

For Immediate Release: Friday, February 22, 2013  
Contact: Lena' Lewis, 619 453-4389



## **MAYOR BOB FILNER CITY OF SAN DIEGO**

### **Statement from the Mayor on the Tourism Marketing District's Decision to Sue**

Last November, before I was inaugurated, I began asking for negotiations with the hoteliers on the Tourism Marketing District to secure a better deal for San Diego taxpayers. Unfortunately, the hoteliers have steadfastly refused all attempts at negotiations. They continue to insist that -- for 40 years -- they alone will decide what happens to \$30 million per year of public funds.

I offered to discuss ways to create greater transparency and accountability in the use of these public funds. They refused to discuss it.

I offered to discuss, as I often did during my campaign, a better deal for the taxpayers, in which tourism pays its fair share of public safety and other costs directly linked to tourism. They refused to discuss it.

I offered to discuss a better deal for San Diegans who work to clean the rooms in our local hotels, providing a living wage to help support workers' families. They refused to discuss it.

I offered to discuss ways to better protect San Diego taxpayers from having to foot the bill if the courts find, as I suspect they will, that this entire scheme is illegal. They refused to discuss it.

I even offered to simply implement the currently proposed agreement for a one-to-two year period, so that we could have time to discuss the concerns of San Diego taxpayers. But again, they refused to discuss it.

Throughout this entire process, my repeated requests for negotiation have been met with threats and scare tactics.

Now those same hoteliers who have refused to negotiate for three months have decided to sue me in an effort to force me to sign an agreement that rips off San Diego taxpayers. Well I wasn't elected to fight for the interests of a small band of wealthy hoteliers -- I was elected to fight for the taxpayers of San Diego.

Tourism is a vital and important part of San Diego's economic recovery. We must move quickly to lawfully and effectively promote San Diego as the amazing tourist destination it is, but we must also safeguard the interests of San Diego taxpayers in the process.

In the days ahead I will be conferring with leaders of our City Council, the Convention Center Board, the San Diego Tourism Authority, and respected business leaders to develop and implement a different approach for marketing San Diego. Working together we will maximize our tourist economy while protecting local taxpayers.

As Mayor I cannot and will not allow a small group of wealthy hoteliers to hold our economy hostage to their personal agenda of secrecy and greed.

###